

Greater Des Moines: Strengthened by Harkin-Led Investments to Recover from, Protect against, and Prepare for Flooding

“What makes Iowa great is its communities, which are strengthened by investments that create jobs, foster economic development, and improve the health and wellbeing of its residents. Local economies are stronger with these investments. I am proud of every project I have worked on that has helped this region.”—Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA)



(Photo caption: Senator Harkin toured the Birdland levee during the 2008 flood.)

The Great Flood of 1993 caused more than \$150 million in damage to Polk County, cutting off water service in Des Moines for a week and inundating more than 3,000 properties. Since that time, Harkin has worked closely with community leaders to protect Des Moines and prepare for the potential for future flooding. Specifically, Harkin has helped the community in the following ways:

Recovering from the 1993 flood: As a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Harkin led the effort to provide emergency disaster assistance to Midwestern states impacted by the 1993 floods. These funds, in particular through programs like Community Development Block Grants and Economic Development Administration funds helped Des Moines recover and rebuild. Through the CDBG program alone, Des Moines received **more than \$7 million** to rebuild and improve storm sewers and construct levees across the community.

Birdland and Central Place Levees: Following the 1993 floods, the City of Des Moines and the Army Corps of Engineers developed a strategy to prevent future flooding by improving the levees at Birdland and Central Place. Senator Harkin aided in these local efforts by supporting authorizations and funding for these projects, of which the federal government provided nearly \$13 million out of a total cost of \$20 million for both projects. These levees were completed in 2011, and the City is now exploring options for revitalizing and growing the neighborhoods they protect.

Disaster Mitigation: In addition to securing emergency appropriations in response to the 1993 floods, at that time, Harkin also greatly expanded the FEMA Hazard Mitigation program in order to better protect communities from future disasters. This program has provided **more than \$10 million** in order to buyout flood prone properties and reduce the impact of future disasters in Polk County.

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